

**2013 STAR Award Program
(A Partnership of the Beverly Foundation and Ride Connection)**

**Guidelines for 2013 Applications
and
Reviewer's Observations from 2012 Applications**

The focus of the 2013 STAR Award application is on programs providing transportation, which include volunteer drivers, and serve older adults. The application includes 20+ open and closed end questions.

For purposes of the application, a volunteer driver program is defined as:

A transportation program or service that includes volunteer drivers. The program or service may also include paid drivers as well as agency owned vehicles and "volunteer" vehicles that are owned by the volunteer drivers.

It is highly recommended that each applicant review, download, and print the application by clicking on the (click here) in the announcement on the Beverly Foundation website. After downloading the application, applicants should seriously consider preparing and proofreading responses to all questions on a Word document, and copy and paste responses into the application.

While you may want to complete the application in a single session, you are not required to do so. You will be able to return to the application multiple times as long as you use the same computer (and the same browser) and the submission deadline has not passed. You should note that to be able to return to your application, cookies must be enabled. If your browser is set to dump cookies each time it is closed, the cookie will be refreshed and a new or blank application will open every time you access your application.

The application process will be open from April 1 through April 15. Eligibility criteria for a 2013 STAR award are that the applicant provides transportation service delivery and must: (1) emphasize or include senior passengers; (2) have a three year history of operations; (3) calculate data (miles driven, number of drivers, number of vehicles, cost per ride, number of senior passengers, etc); (4) include innovative practices in starting up and/or delivering transportation services to senior passengers; and (5) involve volunteer drivers.

The following pages include reviews, comments and feedback from the 2012 STAR Awards applications. The observations identified by staff and reviewers should be helpful in planning your applications.

2012 STAR AWARDS REVIEWS, COMMENTS, AND FEEDBACK

Applications for the 2012 STAR Awards provided considerable information regarding policies, operations, and innovations. What follows is a general summary of feedback which we trust will be interesting and helpful.

General Observations

Beverly Foundation staff and reviewers discussed the applications at length. The following are observations which future applicants should find helpful.

Failure to Mention Senior Passengers

We received many “applications” from large transportation services government agencies, and even senior transportation services that failed to mention senior passengers. Often the service was an ADA paratransit service or a Dial-A-Ride program and failed to mention services to senior passengers. Often community transportation services completed the application with discussion of their overall services, their vehicles, their drivers, their routes, etc., but had limited reference to senior passengers, to meeting their assistance needs, or to providing transportation services to them.

Failure to Read Application Guidelines

Often for-profit agencies did not appear to read the guidelines as they were not eligible for a cash STAR Award, but mentioned what they would do with the cash Award.

Inaccurate Service Data

Budgets In many instances there was a disparity between the budget of the larger “mother” organization and the senior transportation program, even if the “mother” was a senior service organization. In some instances this disparity was 10/1, 20/1, 50/1, or even 100/1.

Cost Per Ride Some organizations may have identified their cost per ride as the charge or donation (\$5.00 or \$10.00) they requested from passengers.

Number of Rides In some instances (especially in the case of transportation services and programs that serve people with disabilities) it was not clear if the rides were senior rides or rides for seniors and other groups served.

Limited Information for Award Selection

Selected Passengers and Single Destinations Several applicants represented adult day centers, senior centers, or housing facilities that only provided transportation to their members, residents, or clients or took passengers to a single destination (senior centers, housing facilities, adult day centers). As was the case with curb-to-curb services, we looked for innovative methods or models that might make a strong case for an award.

Limited Information for Award Selection (Continued)

People with Disabilities Many applicants said that, in addition to seniors, they also served non senior persons with disabilities. While it was not always the case (especially for volunteer driver programs), the applicants often were Paratransit services that had presented limited information about senior passengers.

Information that Prompted a Second Look

Curb-to-Curb Transit When paratransit services reported providing only curb to curb service, reviewers paid special attention the possibility of innovative methods or models that might make a strong case for a STAR Award.

Mobility Managers While some mobility managers discussed the need for travel training to enable older adults to use public transit, others mentioned coordination of or with a community or paratransit service. Unfortunately, some did not mention seniors or introduced services which incurred very high cost per ride.

REVIEWER'S COMMENTS

The following were not eliminating factors for applications, however they caused reviewers to look very carefully at the specifics of the application when applicants....

- ...provided services to a single destination.
- ...focused on food delivery and not providing transportation to senior passengers.
- ...provided services to residents of a single facility.
- ...provided curb-to-curb service only.
- ...provided bad and/or inconsistent data (e.g. 0 drivers 0 vehicles).
- ...included volunteers but did not know number of volunteer hours.
- ...incurred very high cost per ride (\$40.00 +, although high costs per ride were understandably high in rural areas).
- ...contracted with organizations to provide transportation services rather than provided transportation services directly.
- ...had undertaken little or no research related to passenger satisfaction.
- ...were part of a large organization but did not know the organization's budget.
- ...operated a small service with one or two vehicles or one or two drivers.
- ...provided a brief or confusing narrative description of the organization (for example, on the 2012 application, question 21 was worth 40 out of a total of 100 points for the entire application).
- ...paid limited attention to the subject of senior passengers.
- ...included little or no requested demographic information.

Reviewer's Comments (Continued)

- ...submitted applications with little knowledge of guidelines.
- ...requested a STAR "grant" (instead of "awards").
- ...provided a budget not in sync with number of rides.
- ...included a high budget and limited number of rides.

...incurred a high cost per ride (especially in urban and suburban settings).
...involved many volunteer drivers with very low number of volunteer hours.
...provided considerable information about operations and process with limited information about passengers.
...offered limited service hours.
...limited the number of rides for senior passengers per year.
...were not a transportation service but rather a purchaser of transportation.
...indicated they were heavy on staffing but light on technology.
...faith organizations that did not provide rides on Sunday.
...submitted application that emphasized money but provided limited information about services or seniors.
...provided medical transportation services only.
...offered ride share for commuters (but not for senior passengers).
...required considerable (7-day) advance notice requirement.
...offered no data or limited data...especially about passenger surveys.
...indicated they served many passengers in addition to seniors...but provided no specifics about seniors.
...emphasized collaborative efforts or organizational methods, but indicated that an award would go only to the applicant.
...suggested an inability to offer volunteer driver program because of liability.
...identified a need for new funding but provided no specifics.
...indicated a need for more staff but did not use technology, especially software.
...identified a very low cost per ride but involved paid drivers and owned vehicles.
...was a transportation program that provides disability transportation, but did not appear to provide any special services to senior passengers.
...presented confused data when senior transportation service was located within another human or transportation service program.
...identified a solution that was really a problem (e.g. more money for reimbursement...when high reimbursement rate may be the problem).
...provided a description of all passengers but not senior passengers.
...offered considerable philosophy but limited information about service.
...emphasized non-transit services (recreation, day care, social services).
...the applicant organization's organizational description did not provide helpful information about background, purpose, and place and/or was poorly written.

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